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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Tuesday, February 12, 1935.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Questions and Answers." Information from the Bureau of Entomology and and Plant Quarantine and the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Starvation is the most effective weapon against certain kinds of household pests. That's what the entomologists reply when anyone writes to ask what to do about cockroaches in the kitchen. I've had several questions lately from housekeepers who are having an annoying time with cockroaches. So let's stop a minute to comment on the ways of this unpleasant and unwelcome house guest.

Cockroaches -- or water bugs, as some people call them -- will be overjoyed to get chummy with you and share your food, if you'll let them. If you give him the least encouragement, Mr. Cockroach will be glad to come up and see you any time and bring all his relatives along. The easy-going, lick-and-promise housekeeper is the one he gets along with best -- the kind who stacks up the dishes and leaves them to stand all night -- or longer; who rarely scrubs the sink; who lets the garbage pail go without a bath. You know what I mean -- a little spilled food here, a little grease there, food in the cracks of table and drainboard, crumbs in the corners. This is just the way to appeal to the appetite of Mr. Cockroach. Once he's well-established in your home, he'll be glad to feast on any food he finds about as well as other animal matter. Cockroaches often make a tasty meal on woolens or even the leather in shoes or book-bindings or furniture. They aren't fastidious visitors. The sloppier things are, the more contented they are. They're on the lookout chiefly for a warm home, free meals, and cracks and crannies to hide in.

If you don't care to entertain cockroaches in your home, you can discourage their visits by scrupulous cleanliness. Keep food supplies either in the refrigerator or in insect-proof containers. To prevent roaches from midnight snacks in your kitchen or pantry, see that all corners and cracks are clean. The damage roaches do isn't alone in the material they actually eat. It's also in the taint they give to everything they touch. A family of roaches can give that sickening "roachy" smell and taste to your shelves, your dishes, and the food they run over. Soap and boiling water is the only remedy for this disgusting taint.

Once these pests get a foothold in your home, you may have to go in for strenuous measures in ousting them. One effective way of driving them out is to dust their runways with a poison powder. Sodium fluoride powder mixed with flour is a successful poison for this purpose. But keep this powder out of the way of children, as well as dogs and other pets. Other powders that will discourage your roach visitors are borax and sulphur.

But, in general, the best preventive as well as the best cure for these insects is starvation.

The time for spring sewing isn't far off. And right now isn't too soon to get your sewing equipment ready. So some day very soon, I'll bring you news from the clothing specialists about practical home-sewing helps. In the meantime, I'd like to answer one question from a home dressmaker who wants to know when to use a thick pressing cloth and when to use a thin one.

Well, you always use a damp cloth when you are pressing any wool fabric. If you have a very heavy fabric, it will require more steam for successful pressing. So for heavy wool, you use a heavy cotton pressing cloth -- a cloth that will hold quite a good deal of moisture. Some people use heavy canvas for this purpose. Others use heavy muslin. For a thin wool material, cheesecloth makes a good pressing cloth. But when you are pressing silk, you'll probably have best results if you don't use cloth at all -- if you use tissue paper instead.

The clothing specialists tell me that you can use tissue paper either dry or dampened, as the material requires. You lay the paper on the right side and then press with an iron that is not too hot. Or, if the silk is badly creased, you lay the tissue paper on the right side and dampen the paper with a sponge before you press. The paper allows the steam to reach the silk quickly and then dries out quickly with no danger of iron marks.

One friend of ours who does a good deal of sewing for her family has complained a good deal about difficulty with pattern or material slipping on her cutting table. The dining room table she uses has a hard, smooth, shiny surface. So silk goods especially slip and slide very easily on it. The clothing specialists have a helpful remedy for this situation. They say that a piece of oilcloth, spread wrong side up over the table, will make a good cutting surface. Because the cloth is slightly rough on the wrong side, materials will not shift and slide on it.

Last question. A lady writes that she has heard of a very delicious way to use stale bread. This is bread crumb acke, which, she has heard, has something of the texture and flavor of macaroons. She wants to know how to make bread crumb cake. Here's a very good recipe. It calls for seven ingredients. I'll list them for you.

3 eggs
1 cup of sugar
2 cups of crumbs from very dry oven-toasted bread
1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon of salt
1/4 teaspoon of almond extract, and
1 teaspoon of vanilla

Once more, I'll go over those seven ingredients for breadcrumb cake. (Repeat)

Beat the eggs. Add the sugar. Stir in the other ingredients. Pat the mixture evenly into a shallow greased pan. Bake in a moderate oven (about 300 degress F.) for about 30 minutes.

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